

1912
THE LITTLE WINGS

POEMS AND ESSAYS

BY JENNIE DAYKIN

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THE LITTLE WINGS

POEMS AND ESSAYS

BY

VIVIENNE DAYRELL

(VIVIENNE DAYRELL-BROWNING)

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. K. CHESTERTON

OXFORD

BASIL BLACKWELL, BROAD STREET

LONDON: 4 STATIONERS' HALL COURT, E.C. 4

1921

TO "MUMMYDAR,"
WHO HAS SHOWN ME BEAUTY EVERYWHERE.

New Year, 1921.

NOTE

All the work of my young daughter contained in this first collection of her verse is original and has been written without aid of any kind. A few of them appeared in the "Poetry Review and Supplement" during 1918-19, one in "Country Life," and one in "The Book Monthly." The rest are now published for the first time. I wish to acknowledge the immediate recognition and subsequent kindness shown in respect of my little girl's work by the "Poetry Review" in and since Sept., 1918. The value of such practical encouragement cannot be over-estimated. Vivienne's present age is 15½ years.

MURIEL DAYRELL-BROWNING.

Jan., 1920.

PREFACE

By G. K. CHESTERTON

THESE is a happy vagueness, suitable to so poetic and fanciful a volume, about my claims to introduce it in any sense to the reader. But the offer is far too much of a compliment to be evaded; whatever mystery there may be about how such compliments are distributed, or are supposed to be deserved. The writer of these graceful verses and essays is still exceedingly young, and may live to repent her choice and revenge herself on her introducer. It may be suggested, perhaps, that a writer whose current works indicate that he is almost in his second childhood may be appropriately associated with a writer who is almost in her first. Some again might suggest that her friends had cast about for some jaded journalist who had himself occasionally lapsed into minor poetry (as is only too true in my own case) and after studying his compositions had firmly declared "He who was capable of writing and publishing these poems

PREFACE

cannot raise any reasonable objection to any poems." This more ingenious theory is, I need hardly say, an error. However heavy may be my own crimes, I am not so hardened or depraved as to encourage criminality in the young ; and I should not write an introduction to any such work which I did not think promising and beautiful ; and I think this work very beautiful and still more promising. I am somewhat embarrassed as well as gratified by the accident that I do really think one of the most poetical of these poems is the one that happens to include my name in a dedicatory note. I can only say, somewhat desperately, in my defence that I had read enough to decide to put my name to the introduction before I had any notion that it occurred thus in the book.

This coincidence suggests yet another fancy to my morbid imagination. When Sir James Barrie wrote an introduction to the early works of Miss Ashford, many obstinately maintained that the author of the introduction was also the author of the book. I wish I could think that anyone was likely to believe in such a rejuvenation of my powers, and so fresh an outlook upon life, as would be implied by a similar fraud. But that particular type of freshness, in which the child

PREFACE

touches the poet, if it be not anything I have attained, is at least the thing that I have above all things admired. And the other story of the hoax, which is now itself exploded as a hoax, is not altogether irrelevant in this connection. The acute humour of Miss Ashford might, after all, have been imitated or anticipated by the acute humour of Sir James Barrie. But the serious imagination of youth has something individual even in immaturity, and could not be satirised without clumsiness. We may possibly remember it ; and in that case we remember it as a series of intense and more or less inexpressible pleasures. In that sense this sort of immaturity is more of a thing to be laughed with, and less of a thing to be laughed at. But we find it very hard to recall it ; or at any rate very hard to record it. We may therefore welcome all the more any of those rare cases in which it can be adequately recorded. Otherwise the educational records of youth will tend too much to things far less really native to youth than our dreams and the love of beauty. If the paradox be allowable, childhood will be encouraged in every kind of precocity except the kind that is not really precocious. The child who has still some touch with the fairies is

PREFACE

not only more admirable, but really more terrible than the *enfant terrible*.

Matthew Arnold was a fine critic, but, like many modern critics, he sometimes allowed the dislike of mysticism to lead him merely into mystification. And he never said a sillier thing, I may respectfully remark, than when he said that Wordsworth was fanciful in recalling the love of Nature in childhood, because a man's best appreciation of Nature comes when he is about thirty. This may be true of him considered as a landscape painter or a landscape gardener, but Wordsworth was thinking of something much deeper and more divine than any such technical judgments. It was something expressed even better than by Wordsworth, I think, in a very marvellous poem by Traherne about the white light shining on all things in infancy. If we are to have the records of childhood it is well that this, which is the best of childhood, should be recorded; and there are a few who, passing from childhood to youth, are able to record it.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

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TO MUMMY ON HER BIRTHDAY.

(JULY 6TH, 1918.)

A LITTLE plot of sacred earth
Each in his heart doth keep,
Some love the valleys, some the hills,
And some a mountain peak.
Some hold enshrined a Devon lane,
Each has his dearest land,
But give *me* just the plot of earth
On which you stand.

THE WATER-LILIES.

IN places cool and deep
The water-lilies sleep :
Mystic and dim
They slowly swim
And float. . . .

Some holy boat

Freighted with prayers.

Or like a Chalice silver-white

Grail of the night—

Across the moonlight's beam

They drift . . . a-dream.

.
The dark leaves guard the bowl

Holding a flower soul.

HAMPSTEAD, 1919.

(To my darling Grandmother, AMY GREEN-
ARMYTAGE.)

TELEGRAPH MUSIC.

AS I went down from Amberley
I heard the wind sing o'er the land,
Late Summer, early Autumn went
Together dancing hand in hand

Along the curves and loops of road.
The slender poles aloft bore high
The silver threads of gleaming wires
Shining against a sapphire sky.

And on them swifts and swallows sat—
A merry, chattering company :
Martins and sparrows chirped and swung
Along the road to Amberley.

TELEGRAPH MUSIC

Five wires beset with twittering birds
Against a burning summer sky—
Was lovelier page of music seen
Than that by way of Amberley ?

HIGH SALVINGTON, SUSSEX.

September, 1919.

(For my brother, PATRICK RODNEY DAYRELL-BROWNING.)

THE LITTLE RAINBOW.

“It is not life that matters, but the courage you bring to it.”—HUGH WALPOLE.

WHEN I was born, an Angel gave to me
A sparkling Crystal. “It is Health,”
said he.

“Treasure it well—it is not thine” (he saith),

“But lent to thee to guard and keep till death.”

When in my whitewashed Cell one day
Throwing the Crystal up and down in play
It fell . . . and in a thousand pieces lay !

. . . Sobbing, I found one by my prison wall,
No longer 'twas a smooth and lustrous ball.

Its broken edges cut my hand in pain,
Then—suddenly a ray of Sunlight came

THE LITTLE RAINBOW

Striking the bare white wall—and see—
Seven bright colours shimmer and dance to me !

My lonely walls of stone
Seven bright colours own !

Oh, happy chance—that I, through pain
Should these most radiant colours gain !

Lilac and orange, rose and green,
Yellow, purple and ultramarine.

Ah—happiness, that I, through pain
Should these most radiant colours gain !

(To my friend, J. H. HOWELL, Esq., J.P., Clifton.)

THE MOTHER.

“ **W**E, who are about to die,
Salute thee, Cæsar ! ” . . . When
that cry

Rang definite and brave and strong,
When those fatal words were spoken,
In that eager, callous throng
There was a woman standing by
Who knew her heart was broken.

TREASURE-TROVE.

COLD lucent depths where fishes swim,
Crimson floating flowers of the sea,
Ribbons of silver, long and slim,
Coral caverns rosy and dim . . .
These are the things I see.

Shells, pink and wet, on lonely sands,
Desolate beaches where sea-birds scream,
Iron-bound caskets from far-off lands,
Letters written by now dead hands . . .
These are the things I dream.

WORTHING, *August*, 1919.

THE WAX FLOWERS.

I STOOD beside a case of waxen flowers,
Pink cups "from Margate," dusty grass and
shells. . . .

. . . Suddenly I saw a picture of the Sphinx—
Was this, O Mystery, your least of spells?

Clear-cut against a fading Eastern sky
I saw you, riddle of the ages, stand.
Scornful you gazed, smiling that strangle-smile,
And round you blew the yellow, eddying sand.

Dreaming of dynasties forgotten now,
Of purple years, fierce loves, and golden hours . . .
. . . Dreamily a clock chimed—dizzily I stood
Beside a garish case of waxen flowers.

WORTHING, *August*, 1919.

(FOR MR. WALTER DE LA MARE.)

FIRE OF LIFE.

“The one great thing is to have a life of one’s own.”

LO, some with trembling fingers feed the fire
Carefully—thriftily, and in a daze
Add stick to small stick. No hopes, desires
Have they. They never know the blaze,
Only dull glow and bitter tears
For many weary years.

But I . . . fling log on log, until the fire
Leaps, crackles, dances, flame on flame :
Joyous I laugh and sing, with voice and lyre,
Drive back the shadows whence they came.
. . The flame sinks . . . into the storm
go. . . . But, I was warm.

WORTHING, *August*, 1919.

(For my friends, JOHN O’CONNOR, K.C., and
H. M. HYNDMAN, Esq.)

REVEN AND EREWHON.

THIS is my dream :—
 White palaces
 Beset with friendly trees and many
 flowers,

This vision comforted and calmed me
Here, in the pressure of the hours.
 . . . Those friendly trees and lovely flowers.

And they, the people of this happy land,
Walk by the sleepy, blue lagoons
Where scarce a bird th' enchanted silence breaks,
Only the lapping water creams and croons.
 . . . They walk by sleepy, blue lagoons.

Their long, dim hair, gold circleted ;
Their flame-like feet and gentle faces,
These things have called and haunted me

REVEN AND EREWHON

Through many years—in many places.

Those wistful eyes, those gentle faces !

There dwells most perfect peace and comradeship,
No doubts, regrets nor sorrows, hopes nor fears—
Eternal calm and friendship never-dying
And Time is not—nor bitterness, nor tears.

There is no Time, nor bitterness, nor tears.

WORTHING, *August*, 1919.

(For Mr. G. K. CHESTERTON, President of the Poetry
Society.)

FEVER FAIRIES.

WEE Things, with waving hands,
Fluttered about my bed,
My burning face they fanned
And smoothed my aching head.
—But when the Doctor came
Each Fairy-Thing had fled.

And round about the lamp,
Green-shaded, did they spread
Their silvery tiny wings.
The bolder ones would tread
On flame ! But when Nurse came—
“ Oh, drat them moths ! ” she said.

HIGH SALVINGTON, SUSSEX,

CORNWALL.

CORNWALL, Cornwall, land of pixies—
Oh, that I were there !
Where they laugh on purple moorlands ;
Cornwall—wild and fair.

O'er lone beaches in the twilight
Seagulls scream and whirl ;
Breakers boom like muffled thunder—
See the eddies swirl !

Could I stand on stretching beaches
P'r'aps a seventh wave might tell
How it bore the baby Arthur
To the Cornish land to dwell.

Cornwall ! if another Vivien
To your woods enchanted came,
Would you teach to her your magic
For the sake of that old name ?

A BIG FOUR.

IF you should walk beside the Thames,
Or tramp from Southern France to Rome,
Or walk through Sussex downs and woods,
Or fill a book-case in your home,
From January to cold December,
Hilaire Belloc you must remember.

If you should wish to walk the moon,
Or wond'rous treasure to discover,
Or know the sorrows of the poor,
Or feel the rapture of the lover,
Through joys of Heavens or fears of Hells
You may be led by H. G. Wells.

If you love the smell of the salty port,
And the tossing sea has a call for you,
And tropical forests lone and dim—

A BIG FOUR

You need not book your passage through :
Conrad's books may be bought at will
And the stirring stories will grip and thrill.

If tired of the cares of this weary world
In a gay asylum you'd like to be,
With all the laughter and few of the tears,
Then two-and-six is the maximum fee.
With ringing laughter, and lots of it,
You may revel in Chestertonian wit.

"THE NEST," HIGH SALVINGTON,
September, 1919.

(To my Cousin, ADRIAN GREEN-ARMYTAGE.)

SPRING SONG.

TO MUMMY.

THE lambs of Heaven are leaping in their
pastures,
The buds awake on blossom, bush and
tree,

And everything is made just ten times fairer
Because, my own, you've come at last to me.

All birdland sings in chorus gay to greet you
And happy Nature's sent her brightest weather,
And flowers and grass have all come out to meet
you,

For you and Spring, my own, have come together.
I cannot think my happy heart can bear it
That you and Spring, my own, have come together.

Oh, Spring alone is beautiful and dear,
But you who are ten times as fair as Spring

SPRING SONG

Have come with her most radiantly to cheer,
Teach flowers to be more lovely and the birds
to sing.

Long, long I waited till my Spring,
And now the heavy clouds have passed
I care not now for any single thing
Except that you and Spring have come at last.

FROM BOARDING-SCHOOL, 1918.

THE LAST MORNING.

[An English officer is condemned by the German authorities
to be shot at dawn. This is his last night. . . .]

I LAY, tossing in the burning dark
Sleepless and hot. All night long
The roar of traffic broke the silver thread
Of fragile dreams. . . . Outside
I heard the level tread of Prussian guards.
 . . . Then I dreamed.—
And I saw England . . . and the leaping waves
Of silver-grey crested with foam . . .
I saw its stealthy watch-dogs, lean and grey,
Patrolling silently . . . I saw
Green hedges, brier and thorn, bursting to leaf,
The first pale primrose . . . and the misty blue
Of wakening bluebells.—I saw a nest
And five small eggs ! I smelt the scent
Of thyme and wet red earth. I touched

THE LAST MORNING

The maiden violets, and drank, hand-cupped,
The tumbling brook's cool water. Overhead
I heard a blackbird pipe, and in the grass
The tiny grumbings of the ants and flies—

The chirping of the crickets . . .

Dear land . . . dear land

How much I love you !

.

The cracking whip and turning wheels
Woke me to consciousness . . .

It must be day !

The sun streams in . . . I'm glad—— ! I'm glad
It's fine for my last morning, Earth !

IN THE GARDEN,
WEST HEATH HOUSE, N.W.2.

(For my Uncle, MAJOR PAUL DAYRELL GREEN-ARMYTAGE,
117th Mahrattas.)

THE LITTLE ATTIC OF DREAMS.

FROM moonrise unto moonset
I leave this world behind,
And steal into the labyrinths
And chambers of my mind.

Down long, dim corridors I pass,
Through arches and through rooms,
By temples and by lonely lakes,
Past gardens and past tombs.

By sunny, marble terraces,
By lilled pools of sleep,
By glades all full of bird-song
Or wrapped in silence deep.

And up a crumbling, shaded stair,
Where roses bloom and fade,
Into a tiny attic room
Where broken dreams are laid.

THE LITTLE ATTIC OF DREAMS

Each night I come quite silently,
Each night I softly go
And kiss each timid, little thought
That none will ever know.

.
From moonrise unto moonset
I steal away, to find
Those little, old dead dreams that lie
In the attic of my mind.

WEST HEATH HOUSE, N.W. 2

(To my Godfather, MAJOR VIVIAN GREEN-ARMYTAGE,
I.M.S., Calcutta.)

SONG.

THE PEACE MORNING.

I

THE stars will pale and the night will end
And Peace will come, and the end of
strife,

And the lesson be learned that Death is a bend
In the road of life.

II

The shadows will flee and the new Dawn rise
As a maiden bright from her slumber deep
With laughter and light in her clear grey eyes :
“ Little world—awake from sleep ! ”

(To AUNTIE “ TOTO.”)

TO THE UNKNOWN.

IF I, Unmanifested Spirit, be
The door through which thou passest to a
greater room,
Or tiny brook that beareth to the Sea
Its spate of water ; or small key
Of a great casket ; or the loom
Whereon thy fabric's fashioned.

.

Breath of the Unknown, should this strange thing
be,
Seeing my youth, ask not too much of me.

HAMPSTEAD, 1919.

STRATFORD.

AN autumn day with sky of blue—
A beech of bronze, its burnished glow
Stands gallantly to let the sapphire
through.

. . . The Avon moving clear and low,
The spots of sunlight quivering
On water golden-tan and bright,
While overhead the thrushes sing
In ecstasy of mellow light.

. . . All down the beamed and gabled street is
sunlight,
Stilled is the clatter of the human feet. I hear
The feet of Lear—of Rosalind.

.
If I could only find a tune
To fit that golden afternoon.

(For "MUMMYDAR," in remembrance of October 30, 1915.)

APRIL.

(The first little Song.)

I

YOU'RE singing softly, sweet and low,
Cool Spring Wind,
Bringing daffodils—do not go,
Little Spring Wind.

Don't come yet, Summer ; with strong-scented
flowers,

Stay breezy days, and April showers :

For me—out on the downs are happier hours
With April and the cool Spring Wind.

II

Oh—pleasure you give and pleasure you take,
Cool Spring Wind,

In telling the baby buds to awake,
Laughing Spring Wind,

APRIL

Awakening songs to them you sing,
Ah, the happy message of Spring !
“ Unfold—unfold, you tiny thing,”
Hark to the cool Spring Wind !

III

You bend you down to warm Mother Earth,
Cool Spring Wind,
Whisper “ Flowers—flowers, 'tis time for your
birth,”
Gay Spring Wind.
“ Kingcups, crocuses, daffodils, too,
Come up—come out of the brown Earth, *do* !
For everything is waiting for you,”
Says the cool Spring Wind.

LIVERPOOL, 1914.

(For Mrs. J. H. HOWELL, Clifton.)

TO MURIEL.

JULY 6, 1919.

WATCH! morning comes, the mountain peaks
Grow rosy in the glory of the dawn,
While Nature holds her breath in ecstasy
And the summer day is born.—
She comes . . . that red rose pearled with rain
Is not more lovely. See, she treads the lawn
As if she loves it. I will run to her
Crying : “ All joy and peace, this birthday morn.”

THE DAISIES.

To M. D.-B.

WHEN mists beside the river kneel
Like still grey nuns at matins,
And catkins over willows steal,
All dressed in silvery satins,
Before the soldier reeds unbind
Their swords to tilt against the wind,—

Before the grass begins to toss
Or baby-birds are trilling,
Or buttercups find golden floss
Enough to make their frilling.
The daisies sit in starry crowds
Beneath grey April's frowning clouds.

Undaunted, gay and sturdy still
They shake their tears away—

THE DAISIES

The wind may work his roughest will
And roar and howl all day,
See!—all the meadow's gladness lies
Within their brave and shining eyes!

KING'S LANGLEY, *May*, 1918.

LATE MAY.

THE dusky trees, no longer dumb,
Are asking when the Spring will come.
The twilight wind's unscented yet
By phlox or brier or mignonette.
A lonely robin on the wing
Is calling plaintively for Spring.

THE WAVE.

SEA green and pearly it swung on me,
Its foam-flowers climbing high ;
Pebbles and sea-shells it flung on me,
. . . The sea-weeds floated by
Under a swinging sky.

It crashed in exultant laughter,
My wave of the open sea,
And called to its playmates after,
. . . Lucent, and wild and free
The blue smiled down at me.

Rattling the pebbles swept back again
It rose like a bull in its pride,
And tossing white horns it swept over me :
. . . A million more beside
Swelling the flowing tide.

HOVE, *August*, 1918.

(For PAT.)

THE MOON.

I

RIDE on, pale galleon, through the storm-
tossed clouds
Unpiloted, torn sail and swaying mast,
Until thou anchorest in dawn's port at last
With all thy perils past.

II

Ride on, pale ship, breasting the leaping waves,
Ride on, thou ghostly galleon, on the tide,
Until red morning break, and thou shalt glide
To Haven, and there bide.

(To Mrs. MEYNELL.)

THE SWEET PEAS.

BUTTERFLIES, one summer's day,
Fluttered up to where there stood
Tall green stalks against a wall.
There they settled, one and all
Pitying that flowerless stem :
And the rainbow lent to them
All her fairy palette.

WORTHING, *August*, 1919.

(For PAMELA BIANCO.)

THE MAGIC WALL-PAPER.

ONE night when I was very small
I couldn't go to sleep at all,
As to the wall I turned my face
There, on the paper, I could trace
Bright-coloured flowers, gay reds and blues,
And perched upon them—cockatoos.
With open claw and smiling beak,
These painted birds began to speak :—
“ We sit upon these painted flowers
For sixteen weary, silent hours.
At nine o'clock we fly away
To South Sea Islands, where we play
That we're real parrots . . . squawk and shout
And drop our feathers all about—
(And little South Sea Island boys
Pick them up and use for toys ;

THE MAGIC WALL-PAPER

But little coffee-coloured girls
Stick them in their sable curls !)
Where the blue sea's always calm
There we fly from palm to palm,
Up and down the shining beaches
Caves re-echo to our screeches !

.

When the milkman rattles tins,
Then our " office-day " begins.
Perched on strange exotic blooms
Here we decorate your rooms,
Painted birds with painted feather,
Sitting dumpily together,
Only watch life passing by
. . . Wondering why "—

.

Sometimes people slave all day,
But at midnight steal away
To where magic islands are
Underneath some Southern star.

THE MAGIC WALL-PAPER

Brilliant, jewelled, far they flee
Over land and purpling sea,
Through wide spaces wing their flight
In the starry, scented night.
Ah ! however far they roam,
In the morning they come home,
City-slaves until they die :
. . . Wondering why.

WEST HEATH HOUSE, N.W.2.

(FOR R. N. GREEN-ARMYTAGE.)

THE SUSSEX SHEPHERD.

SPRING, 1915.

WHITE lambs that frisk and bleat
By mossy shaded dells,
... *He* is listening ; while the shells
Blow up the village street.

AUTUMN, 1915.

Do you remember, patient sheep,
Those days of peace ? Has he forgot ?
... Now in a dreamless quiet sleep
Rests he in some forgotten spot ?

No—while he sleeps he still doth dream
Of apple trees in fragrant bloom :

THE SUSSEX SHEPHERD

They stood beside the little stream
That tinkled down the shady combe.

.

He has been dead long, little lambs, but yet
The shepherd never shall forget.

(To the farm-lads of Sussex who died for us in the
Great War.)

IMMORTALITY.

THERE is no Death, for Beauty cannot die.

Dawns of rose and gold and pearl,
Bronzed autumn leaves that dance and whirl
In autumn sunshine ; fallen petals lie
In the garden where they fade ;
Their seeds will grow, their warm sweet scent
Will live ; their beauty to the garden lent
Will never die. All that God made
Was lovely first. On that first day was sunlight
Days and nights were happy, till man spoilt it in
his play.

All lovely things will meet in immortality,
On that far beach thunders eternal sea.

(For my baby cousin, GERARD, in Heaven.)

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

OH, little vase of brown and black and red,
Made by a potter's fingers long since
dead.

Perhaps two thousand years have passed away
Since you were fashioned from shapeless clay !
These blurred, scratched figures made by stick or
reed
Have stood the test of ages well indeed.

Although I cannot buy you, you are mine.
I kneel before your dim and quiet shrine
And look at you with reverent gaze,
. . . Then turn and go my many ways.

IN THE BUNNIES' WOOD.

WHERE the young leaves sway in the
wind,
And the little shy ferns uncurl to the
kiss of the sun,
Where the wood is dark and cool,
With the wild flowers by the pool
There let me lie. . . .
The soft breeze passes by. . . .
I am one with the wild blue sky
And the grass where the rabbits run.

(For my Cousin, DOREEN GREEN-ARMYTAGE.)

SLEEP-SONG.

HUSH, baby, hush ! sleep, baby, sleep !
The pale, shy stars will my baby keep.
Across the dark heavens doth gently
creep

The maiden moon who soon shall reap

Her harvest of shining stars—

Sleep . . . Sleep !

(For MICHAEL BRODSKY and HELEN STACK.)

THE TALL LILIES.

I HAVE a little garden plot that's all my very
own,

I have all sorts of summer flowers and every-
one has grown !

And that's the place where, merrily, upon a
summer's day,

I have a strawberry picnic (when the gardener's
away !).

But best of all I love the lily-flowers that grow
Down by the garden path like tall white angels in
a row—

They look so fresh and clean and white, with
golden hearts inside,

And I have thought that they're the souls of
flowers that have died.

(For my kindly first press critic, Mr. EDMUND LEE, of
the *Poetry Review*.)

TO MUMMY AT CHRISTMAS.

COULD I but give you hawthorn blossoms
Of red and white,
If I could strew your path with daisies
Like stars at night—
If I could give your heart's desire
Of king-cups, violets, scented brier
And daffodils—like golden fire—
(Oh ! that I might !)
If I could spend all Spring's bright treasure
With lavish hand !—
But ah ! why waste my time in wishing
When all the land
Lies slumber-bound in snow !
I can but give you holly, mistletoe
And " Love's red roses "—but I know
You'll understand !

Christmas, 1918.

THE WESTERN TRAIN.

WESTWARD—westward, the black train
flies
Swinging round the lovely curve and
climbing up the hill.

The racing wheels its flying feet, the furnace-
glow its eyes,
“ Westward—westward ” is its thundering chanty
still.

“ Westward—westward ! ” It climbs and dips
and swings,
And its engines thunder “ Westward ” as they
flash past poles and wires,
And ah, my heart sings “ Westward,” and swifter
my heart’s wings,
I’ll meet my Fate in Devon—my land of heart’s
desires !

PADDINGTON-BRISTOL EXPRESS,
April, 1919.

*TO MUMMY ON ST. VALENTINE'S
DAY, 1919.*

ST. VALENTINE a merchant is
Of credit and renown,
He keeps a "local branch," I hear,
In every single town.

One day I hied me to the Saint
To see what I could buy,
"I know the very heart you want!"
(He winked his wicked eye.)

"A Cash's name-tape it has on
Marked with a red 'M.D.'—
I have not got this heart in stock!"

.

"Oh, Shopman, can this be?"

TO MUMMY ON ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

Either your goods are very poor

Or else your stock is low . . . ! ”

The shopman stared—“ ’Twas *given* you

Full fifteen years ago ! ”

THE HILL FORTS OF WEST SUSSEX.

WHEN I have gazed upon the mounds
Where many a Saxon chieftain lies,
And seen the traces of the walls,
The towers, the roads, the boundaries
—And seen them with no thoughtless eyes—

When I have seen where there, of late
The British slaves made Roman towns
—Swept by the careless hand of Fate
Their ruins stand, upon the Downs—

My mind, which hears the silent things,
Can hear, as clear as heather bell,
A voice which speaks above the sound
Of murmuring bees, and hear it well.—

“ Still do Our spirits wander on the Down
In lonely places where no alien goes :

THE HILL FORTS OF WEST SUSSEX

And those who see with truthful eyes
Shall leave, one summer's afternoon,
Two thousand weary years behind. . . .

Where lonely peewit calls and cries
Amid the grasses and the broom
Shall see the tribes, and they shall find
The dark, lithe men of Sussex Downs
Chipping the arrows and skinning the wolf,
And walking free in the wind and the sun."

November 11, 1919.

(To my Grandfather, ALFRED GREEN-ARMYTAGE, who
understands.)

AT THE CENOTAPH.

Requiescat in Pace!

SURELY such souls as Arthur's are not
lost !

. . . Perhaps when England calls, those
Knights awake

From their long sleep in Aviron

And draw their stainless swords for England's
sake.

. . . Perhaps they took our form again

And laid the spear and shield aside

For pack and rifle . . . and perhaps

They came safe home. . . .

Perhaps they died.

. . . But I am sure that somewhere Lancelot

Walks royally in this London grey and sad,

And underneath a city clerk's cheap coat

There beats the sinless heart of Galahad.

LONDON, *November 11, 1919.*

(To the SOLDIER-CLERKS of London who fell in the
Great War.)

“ *TO SLEEP—PERCHANCE TO DREAM.* ”

GREAT was thy glory and great was thy fall,
Babylon, O Babylon !
Scorn of all nations, Mother of All,
Babylon, O Babylon !

Then the gleam of thy golden roofs dazzled and
shone,
But now all thy jewels and silver are gone
And in court and in chamber dwell four-footed
things, [sings,
For thy princes' proud harpers the brown linnet
And the sand washes over the tombs where they lie,
The princes and kings so unwilling to die.
Babylon, Babylon, wail for thy sin [thy kin.
O'er the tombs where now lie all thy friends and

Great was thy glory and great was thy fall,
Babylon, O Babylon !
Scorn of all nations, Mother of All,
Babylon, O Babylon !

HAMPSTEAD, *January, 1920.*

(For my friend, Miss M. LOWNDES.)

LETTERS TO ABSTRACTS.

"TO FAITH."

FAITH—sweetest of all childhood's attributes—I have not seen your slim form nor your wide, placid eyes for a long, long time. Surely it cannot be that you have forsaken me? I think that you are frightened by the immense significance of "fourteen years." Fourteen long years on this earth! I sometimes think that when one has passed twelve, there is nothing much to live for. Certainly everything worth remembering happens before one is twelve.

Gentle, unsophisticated Faith, forgive me if sometimes I wonder whether Faith is "believing what one knows is not true." Science—that deadly enemy of Faith and Fairies—has dispersed those happy imaginings that were so sure and

LETTERS TO ABSTRACTS

true because we loved them and believed in them so. The rings in the grass that we gazed at with awed wonder, Science explains by "the circular growth of a fungus." The rainbow that the old King of the Elves walked across when he "went to sup with the queen of the gay Northern Lights," is explained by "rays of sunlight falling on a film of rain and reflected on the convex surface of a raindrop."

Ah, Faith, you used to walk hand in hand with us once! "Anyone who didn't believe in fairies," we used to say triumphantly, "could just go and look at the circles in the grass where they danced." There, we argued, was sufficient proof for the most sceptic.

This followed as naturally as we used to think that if anyone did not believe in "Baby Jesus" (He was always "Baby" to us) he would only have to look for the big star that led the Wise Men, on Christmas Eve, and—there was proof!

The Greatest Teacher Himself said, "Faith

LETTERS TO ABSTRACTS

will move mountains, and through Faith alone, faith of little children, shall men enter the Kingdom."

At the cost of everything counted most dear I would hold Faith. She is called hard names by the world—"blindness—ignorance—stupidity—foolishness." "None so blind as those who won't see," Science and Wisdom sneer and scoff. I care not for them—let them say what they will, if I may have dear, innocent Faith as my companion.

SOUTH HAMPSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL, 1919.

THE RIDER.

“And I saw a rider on a pale horse.”—REV. vi. 8.

ONCE, in a far-off time, there lived a Princess who was all that a Princess should be. Year in and year out she sat in her stone tower, waiting—waiting.

The sun shone and the wind blew, but the Princess heeded none of these things. Young trees sprang up round the castle and grew old and died, and new trees grew up in their turn, and very soon a thick forest surrounded the tower. The Princess was still young and beautiful, though her eyes grew more wistful as the years passed. The little brown mice ran about the floor and played “hide-and-seek” round her chair, and generations of spiders had woven a silvery lace curtain across the door.

And still the Princess waited.

THE RIDER

Many Princes passed the castle, but it was so thickly surrounded by dark trees that they decided "it really wasn't worth while" to even try to enter.

One day the Princess felt strangely happy. "He is coming to-day!" she told herself. She smoothed her trailing white gown and wove a garland of red rambler roses for her long brown hair. Presently the sun went behind a cloud and the wind rose.

A stallion's hoofs clattered in the courtyard below, and, a moment after, someone bounded silently up the stone staircase, with long, cat-like steps. The Princess shivered. In the distance she heard a low rumble of thunder, the still air quivered before an approaching storm.

The Princess drooped her head. Suddenly she felt very tired. . . .

She raised her eyes—the Prince had come then! He was in black velvet from head to foot and a long black velvet cloak swung from his shoulders.

THE RIDER

The Princess did not see his face through her closing eyes, but she felt that it was very gentle and very kind. He carried her downstairs and set her, very small and tired, on his great white horse. Then, leaping up behind her, he galloped on to the highway and into the great Country that the poor little Princess had never seen—and so out of sight.

.

The little brown mice still play “hide-and-seek” and scuffle up the dust round her chair. There used to be a faded old rose-wreath, but that has turned to dust, too, by now.

CLIFTON, 1918.

(For R. N. G.-A.)

THE SYMBOL.

The Scene was laid in a high-class confectioner's.

ALL that evening people of every rank and age had streamed in and out. Those who emerged triumphantly bore large paper bags—for was not to-morrow Good Friday?

As I waited to be served by a person who seemed to be a Duchess-in-disguise, I heard a lady say plaintively, "I have called for my buns, please."

"Are you down on our list? If so, what name?" enquired the Duchess icily.

"Yes; my name is down—Mrs. Lewis," answered that lady meekly.

The Duchess ran an aristocratic finger down a list two feet long.

"Let me see—Langley—Laissey—Luton—oh,

THE SYMBOL

here it is—‘ Lewis, Number 56. 1/- worth.’
Here is your bag. Good evening, moddim.”

Overwhelmed by this graciousness, Mrs. Lewis scuttled off.

A tiny boy, in a red woollen “ tammy,” struggled forward, unstuck three damp pennies from his hot little hand and laid them on the marble counter. The One-Who-Serves-You-When-She-Feels-Like-It leant across the counter and looked down at an anxious little face.

“ Fwee Hot Cwoss Buns, p’ease,” he said timidly.

“ Is your name down ? ” she asked indifferently.

Red Tammy shook his fluffy head and his lips quivered.

“ Then I’m afraid you can’t have them,” she said shortly. Then she added, a little more kindly, “ You see, we’ve only a limited number, and those are for the people who put down their names for them.”

The appealing grey eyes filled with tears as,

THE SYMBOL

standing on tiptoe, he reached up to the counter and reclaimed the three damp pennies. Clutching them in his little hot hand he pushed open the great glass swinging door and trotted up the road. I watched the red woollen tammy bobbing until it was out of sight.

Then the Duchess behind the counter deigned to throw a bag of buns at me.

When I arrived home I put them in a biscuit-tin. They were very stale ! In my mind I saw the jostling people in the confectioner's shop. What were they doing there ? They had come to buy buns of an undoubted staleness—*marked with a Cross*.

It occurred to me that Someone had said something about " A little bread—eat this in remembrance of Me," and the little bun marked with the Symbol took on a new meaning.

I seemed to see, all over the Christian world, a thousand, thousand people, of every land and race, kneeling in a world-wide Easter Communion.

CLIFTON, 1918;

(FOR AUNTIE GWEN.)

“ THE WAY OF DUTY.”

(AN ALLEGORY.)

IN a beautiful, sunny garden, full of roses and fruit trees, there lived one whose only aim in life was Self. One lovely day as she was gathering roses in her garden, she heard a voice calling her name, low, yet clear and persistent. She peeped through the tall yew hedge that separated the garden from the dusty highway, and saw, surely an Angel!—in his white robe, crimson-shafted wings and aureole of golden hair.

“Your gate was locked so that I could not enter,” said the Angel. “Come!”

Still clasping her armful of roses, dusky red, golden and cream, she ran to the gate, locking it carefully after her. This was her habit.

“ THE WAY OF DUTY ”

“ Because,” she complained, “ dirty little peasant children will stand round the door admiring my garden.”

She followed the Angel up the hot, dusty road. They walked on in perfect silence. Now and then she looked at the pale, stern face beside her and wondered why she had left her shady garden.

Presently the silence was broken by the Angel saying sternly, “ Soon we shall come to the rough road—you cannot carry all those flowers ; they are a burden and will only hinder you, throw them away ! ”

“ Oh, not all, Angel,” cried the Maiden. “ May I not keep a few ? ”

“ You had better throw them away now and save trouble with ME later on,” answered the Angel.

So, with a sigh, the roses were cast away. Now the road grew rougher and steeper. The Maiden’s feet were cut by the stones and her white dress torn and soiled ; and, more extra-

“ THE WAY OF DUTY ”

ordinary still, much as she wished to, she could not turn back.

“ Why do you try to deceive me ? ” presently asked the Angel. “ I know that you have not thrown away all your flowers ! ” Much ashamed, the Maiden threw away the rest.

The journey seemed endless, the road grew rougher, stonier, and thistles and weeds hindered their way. Somehow the Angel seemed to be scanning all her thoughts and she felt very uncomfortable. Suddenly the Angel stopped.

“ We can go no further,” he said, “ until everything is relinquished. Only with a clear mind and conscience can you concentrate on work.” The owner of the garden, with scarlet cheeks, drew a tiny, crumpled white rosebud from her pocket.

They resumed the journey in silence. The Being pointed to a green gate and tall hedge in the distance. “ Paradise,” he said briefly, and went on.

“ Why, it is my own, dear lovely garden ! ”

“ THE WAY OF DUTY ”

cried its owner wonderingly. “ And how beautiful it is ; the roses are much larger and redder than they used to be ; and see the cool water-lilies on the pool ; and how the fountains sparkle in the sun ! ”

The Angel smiled, but said nothing.

Soon they halted before the green door. The maiden had grown to love the Angel. “ Won’t you come in ? ” she asked.

The Angel shook his head and smiled. “ Good bye,” he said.

“ Before you go, tell me your name,” begged she.

A ray of the setting sun lit up his face. She wondered why she had not noticed the halo of golden light round his hair. With a smile the Angel said “ Duty.” And where he had lately stood there was no one. He had vanished into the air.

The owner of the garden thoughtfully went inside—*leaving the green door open !*

SOUTH HAMPSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL, 1919.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

HAVE you ever been on the Heath by moonlight ?

In the hard daylight one sees only gnarled and twisted trees, and, here and there, a slim silver birch, and, on the ground, crumbs and crusts, paper-bags, orange peel and banana skins, but at night—ah !—there is a transformation !

When all the pleasure seekers, full of sandwiches and contentment, have left, and the cool grey dusk steals over the great stretch of heath-land—when the silence is only broken, now and then, by the hum of distant traffic, SOMETHING happens !

Close by your seat is a soft little movement—a rustle—a hiss-ss. It is growing dark now, and a few pale stars glimmer in the violet sky. A few “ dead ” leaves dance and eddy in circles, rustling crisply—“ swish-sh.” Is it a trick that your

HAMPSTEAD HEATH

eyesight plays you in the fast-gathering darkness ? —or is it—is it—true that you see tiny, phantom figures in russet and brown dancing madly round and round ? They move in a faint blue light so that, by straining and peering, one can see their faces—quaint and wicked. One, in particular, looks very fiendish ; each time he passes he leers at you, makes a startlingly hideous grimace or merely puts out his tongue. While you watch, terrified yet fascinated, four tiny elves in green, bearing minute lanterns, prance up, followed by a little lady whose dress appears to be thousands of dewdrops threaded on a cobweb. In her hair is just one sparkle. Joining hands with the revellers she spins round and round.

A brilliant idea occurs to you. Your electric torch, the very thing ! A searching beam of white light is directed on to the dancers. . . . Nothing there ! They have melted away. Extinguishing the light you prepare to rise—again you hear that eerie, faint sound—a “ swish ” of dead leaves.

.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH

Among the twisted thorn trees slink tall shadows—a dancing light appears and disappears ; a hint of diabolical laughter echoes far away, faint and still more faint, and then a wicked chuckle close by your elbow—harsh and loud !

Almost with a shriek you leap to your feet and run—run to the friendly road ; on each side you see pale, mocking faces, and a scream of merriment overtakes you. Blundering past the old, gnarled thorn trees, torn by cruel brambles, you reach the edge of the Heath. You stop and listen a moment, your heart pounding. Silence—profound silence. Hark ! was not that a laugh far, far away ? You wait. It is silent now ; you think you must have imagined it all. You walk to the circle of light cast by a lamp by the “ Leg of Mutton ” pond.

.

From the still water comes a little splash.

SOUTH HAMPSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL, 1919.

(FOR VERA COLMAN and BETTY and MARJORIE FRY.)

WORD-ARTISTRY.

“Forlorn—the very word is like a bell.”—KEATS.

WHEN a mother is soothing her baby to sleep, very often you hear her saying “Hush-sh-sh.”

Now, “Hush ” is a “ picture-word.” It gives the idea of waves lapping and ebbing on pebbles, or of wind in the tree-tops. These are both restful sounds and make the baby feel sleepy. This word “ hush ” is so useful and so picture-like that it was made a proper dictionary word—“ to hush.”

Some few poets are very good at word-artistry. Browning says :

“ The quiet-coloured end of evening dies.”

Not a flaming sunset of scarlet, purple and gold,

WORD-ARTISTRY

but a soft mauve and pale primrose sky and evening mists rising. You can see it easily.

Tennyson says that in his garden, on a hot summer's day, he hears :

“The murmuring of innumerable bees.”

There are three M's, two N's, three U's, two B's. These help to build the picture. “Murmuring” has a picture of its own, so has “innumerable.”

Edmund Gosse has written a very beautiful poem called “Lying in the Grass.” The second verse is :

“Before me, dark against the fading sky,
I watch three mowers mowing as I lie;
With brawny arms they sweep in harmony.”

Personally, I dislike the word “brawny.” It calls up visions of grocers' shops and tinned beef; but here you can imagine the faint sky, the trees dark and sombre, and the three figures mowing rhythmically.

“Splashing,” “Gurgling,” “Foaming,” “Tinkling” are all picture-words. An artist

WORD-ARTISTRY

paints a picture on stone or canvas. It lives, perhaps, for hundreds of years. An artist in words paints upon paper, and afterwards upon your memory.

HONEYPEN, CLIFTON,

1917.

(For my Cousin, ADRIAN GREEN-ARMYTAGE,
Downside School, near Bath.)

ON SEEING MARTIN HARVEY AS
"HAMLET."

"The even . . . lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities."

Francis Thompson.

I HAVE seen here
. . . the pomp of anguish and the pride of
pain,

The splendour of sorrow, majesty of tears—
Seen maddened Hamlet dying and Laertes slain,
. . . I shall remember through the years.

Life, thou art petty in these hurried days !
. . . I shall remember, Soul, until the last,
How in a glow of colour and the blaze
Of passion . . . Hamlet passed.

HAMPSTEAD, *January 10, 1920.*

(To MR. MARTIN HARVEY.)

